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ABSTRACT

The focus of federally-funded bilingual education programs has shifted over the past 20 years from serving educationally disadvantaged limited English proficient (LEP) students to serving recent immigrants and identifying alternatives to bilingual education. Since the 1960s, the LEP student population has grown increasingly diverse, illiterate, and economically disadvantaged. The following research and program elements are currently being emphasized: (1) reducing the number of at-risk students; (2) developing literacy in the native language; (3) separating native and second language use; (4) developing cognitive/academic language proficiency; (5) viewing students as active learners; (6) using holistic approaches and themes; (7) developing communicative competence; and (8) grouping students for collaborative work. The following implementation issues confront bilingual education in the 1990s: (1) the need to integrate instructional innovations into the bilingual education framework; (2) the need to examine the effect of state education agency prescriptions on LEP students; (3) the need to address the use of student testing to sort, label, and make noninstructional decisions; (4) the need to examine the effect of state procedures on minority and poor students; and (5) the need to assist Hispanic and bilingual teachers to qualify for a teaching degree. Two charts comparing program trends and emphases, a chart illustrating the growth of minority groups, and a list of 28 references are appended. (FMW)

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BILINGUAL EDUCATION: HEADING INTO THE 1990s
THE U.S. PERSPECTIVE

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BILINGUAL EDUCATION -- TOWARD THE 1990s

The focus of bilingual education programs in the United States has shifted within the last 20 years. Federal involvement in bilingual education began with the passage of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968. The stated goal for this federal program was to provide services to children who were educationally disadvantaged because of their inability to speak English. School districts wishing to voluntarily initiate programs to help students with limited-English proficiency were encouraged to apply for start-up monies to implement transitional bilingual education programs.

Twenty-two years later, the federal involvement continues, but it does so with a different emphasis. More recently, the emphasis shifted to making monies available for serving new immigrant groups and for identifying alternatives to bilingual education (National Advisory Council, 1988). In 1990, the Education Department will allocate $3 million dollars to fund developmental bilingual programs. The developmental programs involve teaching equal numbers of English-speaking and limited-English-proficient (LEP) students in both English and the LEP students' native language with the goal being the same for both groups: to learn a new language (Miller, 1990).

But at the state level, one finds that not all eligible students are being served. Reasons for this inconsistency vary, from a state such as New Mexico not enacting legislation requiring such services, to existing legislation not being re-enacted in California. Perhaps the greatest changes can be seen in the characteristics of program recipients and the emphasis now being placed in the development of literacy in the native language. This paper examines: 1) the differences in LEP student/school characteristics, 2) current research and program elements being emphasized, and 3) implementation issues for the 1990s.

Differences in Student/School Characteristics

Bilingual education programs were first implemented in the United States in the late 1960s, following the arrival of Cuban refugees. Students being served initially were almost exclusively from Spanish speaking backgrounds. Special services were provided to students enrolled in the primary grades, usually in grades first through third. Older students entering public schools after the fourth grade had received prior schooling and

were literate in their first language. These older students exclusively received ESL instruction. Furthermore, these LEP students represented varied socioeconomic backgrounds.

From the late 1970s to the present, school personnel witnessed an increase in the diversity of the LEP student population. LEP students were found among all grade levels and students' socioeconomic levels were more varied. During the decade of the 1970s, the U.S. population grew by 11.6 percent overall, while the number of Hispanics increased by 61 percent and Asian Americans by 233 percent (Crawford, 1989). Since that time the annual number of legal immigrant entries has more than doubled, and the source of newcomers has changed dramatically from developed nations to third world countries (Crawford, 1989). Among Hispanics, Mexican Americans grew in number by 30 percent while Central and South Americans grew by 67 percent (Quality Education for Minorities Project, 1990). Unlike previous LEP students, recent immigrants lacked basic literacy skills in their home language. More importantly, they were unaware of school expectations and procedures. Likewise, within this time span, school personnel saw an increase in the diversity of LEP students' home languages. Urban areas such as Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago provided language-related services to students from as many as 40 to 70 different language groups.

Presently, only one percent of the U.S. population is considered to have limited-English proficiency. However, within the Vietnamese and Hispanic groups approximately three out of every four persons, (75 percent), are considered LEP. For other language groups, between 40 to 53 percent of the population are similarly designated (Oxford-Carpenter, 1984). The high LEP count among Hispanics is of great importance for several reasons. One reason is that Hispanics currently represent the largest segment of language minority populations in the United States. Hispanics account for 40 percent of the total LEP population and 64 percent of the school-aged population with a non-English language background (Jeager & Sandhu, 1985). Secondly, Hispanics are a very young group with a median age of 25 (Hispanic Policy Development Project, 1988). They are also the *fastest* growing ethnic group in the nation. From 1980 to 1989 Hispanics experienced a population growth of 39 percent, *five times* that of the nation as a whole. By the year 2000 the number of Hispanics will grow an additional 46 percent (Quality Education for Minorities Project, 1990). This dramatic growth rate can result in students

receiving less services, especially when one considers that close to 90 percent of the Hispanic population is concentrated in nine states, with more than half of them living in California and Texas alone (Quality Education for Minorities Project, 1990).

At the school building level, students who attend an urban school with a high percentage of minority students are at a high-risk of dropping out. Yet, 88 percent of Hispanics reside in urban areas and states having high Hispanic student enrollment have been found to be among the ten most segregated. According to Orfield, Monfort and Aaron, (1989), New York and Texas have the highest percentage of Hispanic students in 90-100 percent minority schools, with 59 and 41 percent. Moreover, many Hispanics attend predominantly minority schools: New York (83.8%), New Mexico (78.8%), New Jersey (78.3%), Texas (77.7%), California (74.8%), Illinois (74.4%), Connecticut (68.2%), Florida (68.2%), Arizona (67.2%) and Pennsylvania (59.1%).

In addition, a high poverty rate among Hispanics places them at an even greater educational disadvantage. Today, three out of five Hispanic students, or 42 percent, live in poverty. Approximately 75 percent of Hispanic students living in single, female-headed households are classified as living in poverty.

The data presented portrays changes in the LEP student being served, with a major shift occurring in perceiving the student as having more than a language problem alone.

Current Research/Program Elements

. **Reduce at-risk** -- Educators working with LEP students have come to realize that learning English in and of itself will not guarantee achievement. We now know that students whose home language is other than English are one and one-half times as likely to leave school as native English speakers (Wagonner, 1988). Researchers have also noted that Hispanics are twice as likely to dropout as their white counterparts (Cardenas, Robledo and Supik, 1986). Reasons for dropping out vary, but lack of academic achievement stands out as a primary reason. The concern now is to reduce students being at-risk of dropping out. Bilingual program staff must address issues like: (1) LEP student over-representation in special education, (2) LEP students not being identified for gifted and talented programs, and (3) low teacher expectations for language minority youth.

. **Develop literacy in L1** – Skutnabb-Kangas (1980) reported that even after seven years of Swedish instruction, Finnish immigrant children had not reached the average competence of Swedish children in the Swedish language. At the same time they had forgotten their native language faster than they had acquired Swedish. They predicted that for these students both languages will always remain much poorer than for monolingual speakers of either language. Skutnabb-Kangas sees semilingualism existing when the following factors are present: minority children from working-class homes are forced to accept instruction in the foreign, majority middle-class language and their own language is a low-prestige language in school and in society.

The role played by L1 in the development of L2 is found in Cummins' (1979 a) "Interdependence Hypothesis." According to him, the development of L2 is partially a function of the level of L1 proficiency at the time when the student was first introduced to L2 in an intensive manner. Students whose L1 development is disrupted and replaced by L2 will suffer cognitive deficits. Related to this is Cummins' "Treshold Hypothesis" (1979b), which proposes that certain treshold levels of language development in L1 must be reached by bilingual children in order to avoid cognitive deficits and to derive cognitive benefits of bilingualism. He also states that children who are not provided with the opportunity for continued L1 development will not develop the conceptual basis needed for abstraction in their first language. Without this, students will lack the semantic knowledge necessary for developing fluent reading skills (Cummins 1979 c).

. **Separate language use** – During the early years of bilingual education, teachers were encouraged to accept students' home language and to extend it. Discussions often centered around dialectal differences and teachers were chastised for criticizing students' use of anglicisms or "Tex-Mex." Jacobson (1979) encouraged the mixing of the two languages or code-switching, as a strategy for teaching the content areas.

Several researchers (Dulay and Burt, 1978; Wong-Fillmore, 1982) have criticized the mixing of languages for several reasons. Dulay and Burt (1978) and Wong-Fillmore (1982) reported that students would not pay attention to the English version and merely wait for the translation. Gonzales and Maez (1980) expressed concern that, the lower-status language would be used less often.

In the Significant Bilingual Education Features Study Tikunoff (1983) found that teachers in the 58 bilingual classrooms studied primarily used English but 25 percent of

the time alternated to students' L1 to accomplish certain functions. According to Tikunoff about half of the alternations were "instructional developments," about a third were "procedures and directions," and a fifth were "behavioral feedback to students." The main purpose for shifting to the L1 was to make sure LEP students could participate effectively in instruction provided in English. After reviewing several studies Fillmore and Valadez (1986) concluded that in classrooms where languages of instruction are not kept separate by time blocks, teachers predominantly used English as the language of instruction.

During the past three years, 23 new two-way bilingual programs have been implemented (Miller, 1990). In January 1990, the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs announced the availability of $3 million dollars to fund more new two-way bilingual education programs

. **Develop cognitive/academic language proficiency** -- Cummins (1984) has determined that it takes immigrant children four to seven years to learn English at a level that permits effective participation in instruction. Teachers are asked to develop academic skills in L1 because the great majority of skills learned will transfer easily to the second language (English). Chamot and O'Malley (1986) have developed the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach, an ESL content-based curriculum designed to teach language learning strategies to LEP students.

. **View students as active learners** – Initially, language teaching focused more on aspects related to teaching, i.e. on methodology and materials. Teachers used the audio-lingual method with its emphasis on language being learned through habit formation, rote-learning and practice (Morley, 1987). Natural processes were recognized and the role of the teacher shifted to that of a facilitator. According to Morley (1987) the teachers and teaching materials must adapt to the learner rather than vice-versa. Similarly, Wong-Fillmore, Ammon, McLaughlin and Ammon (1985) reported that the development of English production and comprehension was related to teacher responsiveness to student cues. Teachers who adjusted their linguistic interactions in response to student feedback were more likely to produce English language gains. Such adjustments included simplification of syntax, less rapid speech and repetition. These teachers not only allowed but encouraged student interaction. Garcia (1987) recently reported on instructional strategies utilized in effective bilingual classrooms. He suggests that student-student interaction discourse strategies are important to enhanced linguistic

development.

. **Use holistic approaches, themes** – In the early 1970s teachers received inservice on methods for introducing initial reading instruction. Instructors acquired information about three methods for teaching Beginning Reading in Spanish: the phonetic method, the syllabic method and the global method (Thonis, 1970). Because Spanish was such a phonetic language the overwhelming majority of bilingual teachers initially used the phonetic method, with its letter-sound correspondence, followed by the combining of consonant-vowel combinations to form syllables. Students were expected to naturally make the transition to reading whole words and even phrases as these were repeatedly encountered. While teachers received inservice on the use of the language experience approach, they reserved the use of this reading approach when teaching to read in the second language. Moreover, teachers were asked to delay the teaching of writing until after a student was reading at a fluent level.

Kline (1988) reported that reading experts now focus on whole language development, integrating the teaching and learning of reading and writing, and the use of children's literature to counter skills-driven student basal readers. Bilingual education teachers are asking their students to maintain dialogue journals and using predictable stories.

. **Develop communicative competence** – Learning to speak in a grammatically correct manner is no longer considered a mark of a proficient speaker of a second language. Speakers must also be aware of the rules of language use. Widdowson (1978) sees teaching language as having a communication focus. In 1980, Canale and Swain developed a framework. It included four areas of knowledge and skills: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. Students are also being asked to use language for specific purposes. Teachers use syllabuses that contain the notions and functions of language.

. **Group students for collaborative work** -- Educators are encouraging teachers to use new structures that promote group work, planning tasks, discussing and reporting outcomes. Students develop group interaction skills as they learn thinking skills and extend their language skills.

ISSUES FOR THE 1990s

Instruction

In the area of instruction, I am very hopeful. The changes we see are positive and actively address some recurring issues such as relevancy in the curriculum, students' lack of background knowledge and small amount of students' verbalization in classrooms. While the changes are just beginning, school districts have requested inservice on whole language and cooperative learning, and teachers have demonstrated an interest in using these strategies. However, school personnel need to explore more than just the "how to." Guskey (1990) emphasizes the need for continued support and follow-up beyond the start-up year. He cautions us that last year's innovation can be seen as another fad. For students to benefit, their teachers must see the connections among these new innovations and how these support their work as bilingual teachers.

Student Assessment

The vast majority of the states have implemented competency testing for grade promotion and to meet graduation requirements. Students who do not pass the exit exam will not graduate. Recently, the Texas Education Agency responded to my request for data on the numbers of Hispanic students completing the twelfth-grade but not graduating. They informed me that the state was not keeping records on differential rates for neither poor nor language-minority students.

At the other extreme, questions arise about the use of testing scores in placing students. Because state bilingual education programs cost money, only students found to be eligible receive such services. Furthermore, bilingual programs place added demands on school administrators such as searching for qualified (certified) bilingual teachers. These factors together with increasingly prescriptive time and treatment guidelines result in a labeling and sorting process whereby specific prescriptions for instruction are then mandated. In Texas, for example, students are labeled BE1, BE2, etc. to denote language dominance. Students may have been tested at the age of four or five years of age when initial language development (concepts and language) are still developing. The language scores then dictate the amount of instruction received via the home language or through use of English as a second language methodology. A student,

once labeled, retains that designation until exited from the special language program. This mandate applies as well to four year-old LEP students who are tested upon enrolling in a one-half day preschool program. It is unfortunate that these students are labeled as lacking; as having deficits when they are placed in a testing situation that is totally unfamiliar to them, having had no previous need for language performance or practice on test-taking skills.

These designations similarly impact this LEP student when tested for mastery of the essential elements (the state's minimal learning outcomes). Students labeled as Spanish-dominant LEPs are tested in Spanish and need not show mastery in English. Those labeled as English-dominant LEPs will be tested in English. For these children, this mastery test is certainly a "high-stakes" testing situation (Maddaus, 1989). Failure to achieve a 70 percent mastery in this all-English exam can result in their being retained, to repeat the grade level for an entire year. This decision is based on one source, the exam, administered entirely in English to a LEP student. For Hispanic students and other highly concentrated language groups, this act increases their likelihood of dropping out by 40 percent. Should they be retained twice, their chances of dropping out rises to 90 percent.

Outside the bilingual program, language-minority students in all-English programs are experiencing, in large numbers, a similar fate. Increasingly, students are placed in linguistically isolated classrooms. Students not showing progress are placed in "transitional classrooms." Three years ago, transitional first grades initially appeared. Last year, transitional kindergartens classrooms were started. In one San Antonio school District criteria for inclusion rested solely on students' knowledge of the sound/letters of the alphabet in English.

The Texas Education Agency responded to my inquiries for breakdowns by ethnic, bilingual sub-classification and income levels with, "We are not keeping records on that." Yet, it was the state of Texas that issued those specific guidelines to be followed on the basis of a theoretical framework (that of California) but not really having any factual evidence on the effectiveness of the program for particular categories of students.

Too Few Minority Teachers

The supply of minority teachers will decrease by the late 1990s, declining from 10 percent of the teaching force to a mere five percent. This loss is expected to impact the education of minority and language minority children because it comes at a time when minority students are expected to comprise 50 percent of the student population in urban areas.

Several factors affect the teaching-pool but two major factors need to be addressed immediately, and definitely before entering the year 2000. These include the high dropout rate among Hispanic students which presently stands at 45 percent of the students, and the increase in testing at the institutions of higher education.
Only about 13 percent of Hispanic students enter college, and of these, approximately six percent complete requirements for a bachelor of arts degree. These small numbers are further diluted, because less Hispanics are entering the teaching profession.

Moreover, prospective teachers who are Hispanic face an additional challenge with the proliferation of standardized testing required at the college level to be able to qualify for entry into the teaching field. A study conducted by Pritchy Smith (1988) reported that since the inception of this required testing, over 10,000 Hispanic prospective teachers have been denied entry into teacher education.

Summary of Issues for the 1990s

- Need to integrate innovations (mastery learning, whole language, cooperative learning) within the bilingual education framework.
- Need to examine how prescriptions set by the state eduction agencies (showing mastery for grade promotion, exit exams for graduation, ESL classes and diploma type received) are working with LEP students.
- Need to address the issue of testing being used for sorting and labeling and not for instructional decision-making.
- Need to explore/discuss how procedures at the state level contribute to placing language minority and poor children at a high-risk of dropping out (transitional first grade, transitional kindergarten classes).
- Need to search for ways to assist Hispanic and/or bilingual education teachers in qualifying for a teaching degree.

In conclusion, the big picture that emerges is this: there is an urgent demand for leadership in advocating for the needs of poor and minority children. Bilingual educators cannot continue to focus solely on implementation issues, focusing only on the "how to" of bilingual education. Advocates for these LEP and economically disadvantaged children need to examine: (1) what is the number of students being served, and (2) the impact of the intervention.

NOTE 1: On July 14, 1990, the Texas State Board of Education voted to stop schools from holding students back one year in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. The board stated that transitional classrooms were tantamount to retention.

BILINGUAL PROGRAM TRENDS

Recipients

Early 1970s		Late 1980s
Spanish	→	diverse languages
Grades 1-3	→	all levels
Literacy in L1	→	immigrants, third world
Mixed SES	→	2-5 poor (40%), single female households, poverty increased (75%) last 3 years

PROGRAM EMPHASIS FOR THE 1990s

Goal in 1970s		Goal in 1990s
Learning English	→	reduce at-risk
Language Use		
Bilingual	→	develop L1 literacy
Instructional Methodology		
Mix Languages	→	separate, 2-way developmental
Basic Interpersonal Communication (BICs)	→	cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)
ESL, Teacher Centered	→	student centered (active vs. passive)
Analytic	→	holistic, thematic
Linguistic Competence	→	communicative competence
Competition	→	collaboration
Student Outcomes		
Memory, Comprehension Emphasis	→	higher order thinking skills (h.o.t.s)
Achievement on Tests	→	performance assessment (portfolio)

POPULATION GROWTH

1970s population growth

United States	_____	11.6 percent
Hispanics	_____	61 percent
Asians	_____	233 percent

In Crawford (1989)

1980s to 1989 population growth

Hispanics	_____	39 percent 5 times the U.S. average
Mexican Americans		63 percent of Hispanics
Mexican Americans	_____	30 percent growth
Central/South Americans	_____	67 percent

Quality Education for Minorities, 1990

Year 2000 population growth

Hispanics - approximately 46 percent

Hispanics

Average age	=	25 yrs.
90%	_____	in 9 states
88%	_____	urban areas
60-80%	_____	attend predominantly minority schools (in 10 states)
42%	_____	are poor (3 of 5 children)

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Appendix 16

END

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